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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002986

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E.O. 12598: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: ADDITIONAL NARCOTICS CERTIFICATION
NOTES

REF: ABUJA 02865

[11.](#) In addition to reftel's report card, Post wishes to provide the following information on Nigeria's drug control efforts.

[12.](#) Major Traffickers: The initial report card submitted by Post (reftel) should be revised to show that Nigeria has arrested and is prosecuting at least one major trafficker. In January 2002 NLDEA personnel at MMIA arrested a Nigeria Airways flight attendant and seized 1.7 kilograms of heroin. An ensuing investigation by the NDLEA led to the arrest on April 17, 2002 of Anthony Onyechesi, the trafficker providing the heroin for this and other shipments to the U.S. The NDLEA also seized assets belonging to this trafficker, including four vehicles. DEA confirms that Onyechesi is a significant trafficker.

[13.](#) The Nigerian and Filipino cocaine traffickers arrested in connection with the August 27, 2001 seizure of 60 kilograms of cocaine at Lagos' Tin Can Island Port, on October 25, 2002, were convicted on all three criminal counts with which they were charged and sentenced to nine years imprisonment. They are currently serving their terms in Nigeria.

[14.](#) Extraditions: Attorney General Kanu Agabi is committed to the successful extradition of Nigerian fugitives to the U.S. He has assigned the MOJ's most experienced extradition prosecutor to the US cases and has pledged to appear in court himself to argue the extradition cases. He has consulted the new Chief Judge of the High Court, Rosaline Ukeje, for assistance in assigning competent judges to hear the U.S. extradition cases. The MOJ has not established a formal extradition unit, but this informal system of giving U.S. extradition requests preferential treatment shows promise and unprecedented commitment. MOJ officials believe that the creation of a formal unit is inappropriate at this time given the modest workload of US extradition requests, though such a unit could be created if the pace picks up.

[15.](#) The extradition case currently before the court -- Daniel Oruhio -- opened in early October under a temporary judge who could not finish the case before she went on leave. Therefore, the case last week was transferred back to the Chief Judge of the High Court, who assigned it to the "High Court Annex #2" on October 28, 2002. The judge's name will be known shortly and proceedings should commence shortly.

Asset Forfeiture

[16.](#) The NDLEA Chairman recently submitted a proposal to the President, asking that the NDLEA be allowed to keep a percentage of the proceeds from drug traffickers' assets forfeited and auctioned off by the NDLEA.

[17.](#) In the prosecution of the Nigerian and Filipino traffickers associated with the August 27, 2001 seizure of 60 kilograms of heroin (para 3), the court ordered the forfeiture of 8.54 million naira (approximately USD 67,250) in funds identified in two

Nigerian banks.

Controlled Deliveries

18. DEA's Lagos Office clarifies that controlled deliveries can only be initiated after a viable opportunity of drug trafficking to Nigeria has been identified.

19. The NDLEA in early October announced publicly that it is investigating three major commercial banks for laundering drug proceeds. According to DEA, it is working with the NDLEA on a joint investigation of suspected money launderer (name to be supplied by classified email).

Regional Narcotics Cooperation

10. The NDLEA has shown a strong commitment to greater cooperation in the West African sub-region and throughout the continent. An extradition agreement was inked with South Africa in October 2002, building on a bilateral drug and crime control agreement forged last year.

11. DEA reports that the NDLEA has been the catalyst in the West African Joint Operation (WAJO) which brought together drug enforcement personnel from the entire sub-regional and led to the successful execution of a coordinated surge operation at air- and sea ports. 164 drug arrests were recorded during the six weeks of this regional enforcement initiative. This initial success is encouraging greater cooperation in the sub-region, and useful, collaborative links are being established among counter-narcotics officials. The NDLEA has also increased cooperation with its neighbor Benin, with DEA assistance. In early October the NDLEA and Beninese Police conducted a joint drug interdiction operation at the busy Seme border land border crossing between the two countries.

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